# TO THE
# PARLIAMENT
## Of the COMMON-WEALTH of
# ENGLAND,

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## The Present Authority of these Nations Assembled at *WESTMINSTER.*

*A Presentation, by a faithful Friend to the Nations, in the Name and by the Spirit of Jesus Christ,* King *of Righteousnesse and Peace, That you may take off oppression, and free the people from all their cruel bonds that have been imposed upon their bodies, Estates and Consciences in the dayes of the reign of Antichrist, that Truth, justice and Righteousness may come nigh unto us, and the Kingdom of the Son of God set up among us, that you and we may at last be free subjects of Christs Kingdom, where* Righteousnesse, Truth and Peace *may run down and be established in the earth for evermore.*

FRIENDS,

IT is acknowledged that the Lord God (who rules over all in the kingdoms of men) hath done great and honourable things by you, and with the face of your Authority in your dayes, and since your first appearing on the Throne, mighty things hath been brought to pass in our Nations, by the hand of the Lord, insomuch that many mountains have been abased, and many sturdy oakes have been cut down, and many cruel Lawes have been made void, and even the way of the Lord, and the way of the coming of his Kingdom hath seemed to be prepared; For the kingdom of Antichrist, and the beast, and the whore (the false Church) hath in many things received a mortal wound in this Nation, and there hath been divers times the fair blosoms of the glorious appearance of Truth, Righteousnesse and Peace, and there have been many fair promises and pretenses made by many of you, like as if the *Kingdom of Jesus* had been at our door, ready to have entered in our Nations, whereby many good hopes we have had to have been made *a perfect free people* ere this day, from the chaines of *Antichrist and the Whore* (the false Church) and from every branch thereof, and that we might have sitten together in peace and unity, and in freedom from all the oppressions of our enemies.

But alas, alas, this Glorious work of *Reformation* hath been interrupted before our eye, and the pretious buds and good appearance of Glorious fruits hath been withered and blasted in our sight, so that our good hopes have perished, and our Freedom hath been intercepted, through the evil dealing of many *unfaithfull men,* so that Antichrists kingdom hath not been utterly rooted our, nor the oppressive Lawes of the Whore (the false Church) wholly broken down, but the rather have seemed to be revived again, and the *Kingdom* of the Son of God hath been warred against, and Truth, Righteousnesse and just Judgement hath yet been kept out of the Throne, and the *Lamb* and his *Army* and followers have been opposed by open and secret Rebellion, so that though there hath been great appearances of good things now and then, yet ever & anon Cloudes and darkenesse hath overshaddowed the Nations again, and the *good hopes* of faithfull people have been driven backwards, and Reformation stopped, and your own *vowes promises and pretenses* have remained unfulfilled, and we are yet an oppressed people; and the cause of this hath been from some unfaithful men that have neglected the good work of the Lord once intrusted with them, and have sought themselves, and their own honours and interests, and have sitten down at ease and rest in the flesh, glorying in the spoil of their enemies, and thereby have they become unfaithful, and unprofitable in carrying on the Lords work, for some have been of a sincere mind for a season, and made a good progresse towards the attaining a Kingdom of Righteousnes, and the removing of all oppressions, yet when they have begun to seek themselves in this World, and to take unto themselve the *honours and Titles, and possession of their enemies* (whom the Lord cast out before them) and so have become guilty of their enemies sins, then they have been choaked, and the good work of the Lord by them could not prosper, but it hath fallen in their hands even because of their *Apostacy,* whom the Lord hath removed in his wrath, which to you all may be examples, that ye follow not their steps; For, for these causes I tell you hath the *true Reformation* been turned backward, and the work of the Lord remained unfinished, insomuch, that *Oppression* and *injustice,* and *Tyranny* yet remains upon the people, and ten thousands lies groaning under the yoak and bondage of *Antichrist, and of the Whore* (*the false Church*) in persons, estates and Consciences, and are ready to depart out of all good hope and confidence, that they shall never see, through you, the finishing of that long since begun good work of *perfect Reformation,* and freedom from all oppressions and amongst the many great oppressions and cruel burthens yet remaining in our Nation, there is at this day one particular *Oppression* abounding, under which thousands of the free People of the Lord and of these Nations, lies unjustly suffering in their bodies, estates and consciences (to wit) this, way of *forced maintenance of the Ministry* by *Tithes and money, and yearly stipends,* which many are violently forced to pay through *oppression,* and contrary to *equity,* and because hereof is God not well pleased with you, but his wrath is kindled already, for the cry of the unjustly afflicted under this one oppression, hath entered into his ear, and he will be avenged speedily, even because of the oppression of his People in this very particular, who cannot out of a good conscience pay *Tithes* or money or any other thing contrary to equity, to the maintaining of this Ministry and these Ministers which they receive no benefit by, neither are under their Ministry. And forasmuch as this way of maintaining Ministers and Ministry *by force* is wholly Antichristian and of the Whore, (the false Church) and never was in the *True Churches of Christ* in the Apostles dayes, neither did ever Christ or his Apostles give institution or example for such way of maintenance to Christs Ministers; but being that this way of *forced maintenance* by Tithes, and money and yearly stipends is come up long since the Apostles dayes, and is the very institution of the false church of *Rome,* and was first practised by her authority in our Nation, and by the same spirit at this day this oppression remaineth among us; and likewise it is wholly unreasonable that one sort of people should be *compelled* to maintain an others *Ministers* whom they do not hear, nor receives their Ministry; and also this way of *Maintenance* is one of the greatest oppressions in our Nation, and many hundreds of my Brethren have suffered great oppression thereby, some the loss of estates, and many the loss of their liberties, and some the loss of their lives also, in so much that this oppression is fully ripe to be *cut down, and removed* out of our land.

Wherefore it lies upon me from the Lord, to request it of you, and to lay it upon you, as being the present Authority that hath power to do it, that you speedily order the removing of this *oppression* of *forced maintenance* to Ministers out of the Nation, and that no man henceforth be compelled or forced to maintain Ministers and Ministry by *Tithes or money or otherwise,* but that every man be left free, to give what and how much as he pleaseth, to what Minister as he will; onely if any do hire a Minister, and promise so much, then it is equity that he that is hired have the benefit of the Law, to receive what he is promised by force, if he cannot freely; But let not any people be forced by your Law *to hire Ministers,* neither one sort to maintain another peoples Minister, but let every sort of people live under what Ministry, and hear whom they please, and also maintain their own Ministers that labours for them, and this is reasonable, and would content all the faithful people, for it is wholly unequal that any people should be forced and compelled to maintain another peoples Minister, which doth no work for them, and it is also wholly inconsistent with the good Government of a Common-wealth, and absolute contrary to Christian Liberty, and is a very chain of Antichrist upon the good people, and the main cause of heart-burnings, and strifes and envyings among subjects, and one of the chief props of deceivers and false ministers, that covets to run after great benefices, and cares not for Souls, and also the God of Heaven is vexed with this abomination, and it is certain that you and the Nations shall never be established in true and *perfect peace and unity,* while this oppression remaineth, nor till that in all things *Conscience* be left free, to the exercise of the Spirit of God.

Wherefore I am come to your door on the behalf of the Lord and all his people, and I cry, and ten thousands with me (in Spirit) of your Nation, let this *unreasonable, oppressive and Antichristian* practice of *forcing maintenance to Ministers* be speedily removed out of our Land, and let the persons, Estates and Consciences of your faithful Friends be freed from this cruel burden, that they have long born by your and their very enemies; and also I lay it upon you, that you clear and free your selves in all things from the false church, and be not servants to her, drink not her cup of fornications, neither in any thing carry the Whore; And hereby should that long born and heavy yoak of Antichrist be removed, that hath laid upon the good peoples Persons, Estates and Consciences, and false ministers that runs for hire, and not to win Souls (who are oppressors) should hereby be limitted, and the faithful Ministers of Christ, who are sent of him, would be the more encouraged to Minister freely, who have received freely, and this would be the way to bring Blessings and Peace amongst us, and to rejoice the hearts of the Righteous, and to stop the spirit of oppression, and hereby you would be made honourable, and the Lord himself glorified, and his people a free people; So that for these causes, it is upon me to *demand* it of you, that you remove the oppression aforelaid, of *forcing maintenance* for Ministers, and leave every sort of people free to maintain their own Ministers, as the Lord shall lead them.

For this was the way in the true Churches, the Ministers of Christ did eat of the milk of the flock which they kept, and of the fruit of the vineyard which they had planted, freely given them, and they reaped carnal things where they sowed spiritual, yet as a free gift unto them, and not by force, nor as a debt, for this way of *forcing maintenance* was never in being among the true Churches, but is of the false church, both in its Original and in its standing to this day, and out of her cup (who hath made Nations drunk) hath our Nation drunk this abomination and oppression, and it is the remainder and one of the strongest parts of *the Whore of Rome* yet left in *England,* and it is full time to be removed clean away from us. And if you do it, then shall we have cause to believe that you intend well to the Nations, and our long decayed hopes concerning you will be again revived, and our Faith will be encreased, that you will yet suffer Righteousnes and Mercy to flourish, if you take off every oppression, and make the people free; but if you do it not, but will be the imposers of unrighteous things upon the people under you, and will *carry the Whore,* and yet drink her cup, and *compel* others to drink it, then the Lord will break you to pieces, and bring freedom to this Nation some other way, and you and they and the Beast and the Whore and your oppressions shall all fall together, and sink as a stone into the Sea, and your remembrance shall be blotted out, and perpetually perish; and these are the *Words of the Lord God unto you,* wherefore that you may live in true honour, and not perish in perpetual shame, and that the Lord may bless you, and not make you a curse, and that the Lords people may pray for you, and not against you; I say, consider in the fear of God, and with a willing mind grant this my desire, and in so doing you fulfil the Will of the Lord, and thereby be established over all your enemies. Many things more on the Lords behalf I have to demand of you, but this for present, from a lover of Righteousnes, and a Friend to this Nation.

*EDWARD BURROUGHS.*

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